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## The study of a socio-cultural phenomenon of capital

The article is devoted the study of a socio-cultural phenomenon — Nur-Sultan. Its content reflects the views of focus group participants on important aspects of the study of the role of Nur-Sultan in the cultural and civilizational process: The socio-cultural features of the capital, the perception of the urban space of Nur-Sultan, intercultural communication. Nur-Sultan as a phenomenon becomes a subject of knowledge of the humanities where domestic scientists attach special significance to judgment of a role of the capital in public consciousness, to formation of patriotism and civil feelings and studied socio-cultural features of the capital, factors and mechanisms of the organization of cross-cultural communications. The new capital is represented the center which has to give an impetus to the economic growth of the country, overcome uneven placement of the population, fasten multiethnic structure of Kazakhstan, to become the city cosmopolitan. As a result of discussion, the impact of the capital on the political culture of youth and its social activity, young people's views about the prospects and cultural significance of Nur-Sultan, the understanding of the interaction of scientific-technical, educational, political, artistic and aesthetic spheres of the organization of cultural process were identified.

*Keywords:* city, capital, urbanization, culture, civilization, intercultural communication, Nur-Sultan.

### *Introduction*

The city, gradually losing the narrow industrial specialization that determined the face of the city in the XIX century, in the XX century usurps the functions of the cultural center, thus it becomes into the space, in which the uniqueness political will of the state confronts with plural attempts of development of the city. In other words, we can no longer distinguish the dominant style of the city or the dominant function of the city. We have to divide the space of the city on zones, sectors, districts. The body of the city becomes too large to remember about the ideal destination of the city. There is no more of that integrity in modern city, which could be defined by the fortress wall, as there is no patronage from the unified government. This difficulty in determining the boundaries of the nature and destination city is the basis of modern urban studies. Each new generation, reared in new and old towns, seeking a more accurate way of explaining the phenomenal strength of the city.

### *Experimental*

The research methodology is determined by the purpose of the study. The work uses such principles as the principle of development, the principle of concreteness, the method of ascent from the abstract to the concrete, general scientific methodological approaches — systemic, structural-functional, comparative, activity, method of cultural relativism, cultural-analytical method, hermeneutic methods. In particular, focus group and SSPS methods were used in the study. The article shows interpretation of the socio-cultural phenomenon of capital, using the urbanization concepts of Richard Florida, John Rennie Short, etc.

### *Results and Discussion*

The urban population has sharply increased in the history of the world. In 2010, almost the half of the world's population, it is 3.5 billion people live in the city, to 2030 is expected the population growth in the city up to 5 billion [1; 420]. This situation causes considerable interest of representatives of various branches of scientific knowledge to the phenomenon of the city.

We agree with the opinion of E.N. Mastenitsa, that “to understand “the soul of the city”, “log” in its cultural space and interact with him is possible only through a deep and comprehensive study” [2; 127].

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The process of grand transformations of urban cultures is happening in a global world space. An American researcher, Richard Florida, considers the modern city as a center of creativity, mobilization, development center for energetic people. According to his opinion, the creative rule ensures regional economic growth and these people prefer innovative, diverse and tolerant place [3; 35].

An urbanization expert John Rennie Short indicates the variety of parameters of the cities: The Authoritarian City, The City of Difference, The Cosmic City, The Collective City, The Postindustrial City, The Postmodern City, The Postcolonial City, The Immigrant City, The Economic City, The Competitive, The Gendered City, The Erotic City, The Political City, The City Designed [4]. Each parameter affects on fundamental changes in the spatial organization of society and social organization of space. Each process (globalization, differentiation of life and postmodernism) is closely associated with the functional structure of the city.

The modern city is a rather difficult place to live. The growth of industrial production, the deterioration of the environment, the transport problems, overcrowding, high cost of living, the marginalization and state of neglect of some regions, high levels of crime — is not a complete list of problems faced daily by the inhabitants of modern cities. Jean Baudrillard in his lecture “City and hatred”, read at the French University College at Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov, notes that the city has lost its integrity, the wholeness, became disintegrated and disorganized, turned into a “Museum Perfect Deconstruction” [5].

R. Park is a researcher of the Chicago school of urban sociology of the twentieth century, exploring the urban lifestyle, connected a general biological (the law of evolution, struggle for existence) and social patterns (social cooperation, competition, balance, and order in society) [6]. The main differences between “social ecology” from biological ecology by Park, due to the nature of human existence, and the communities formed by people; nature is changed, influenced to the ecology of the social division of labor. People, unlike animals, can radically change their environment and nature. Anthropogenic changes in the environment — a characteristic feature of human existence. The language and human culture allow you to create more complex systems of coexistence species in comparison with the biological environment. Thereby, R. Park in his theory laid the differences between the two groups of factors, affecting on urban environment: Biotic and cultural.

It is considered by many researchers of the city as the socio-cultural phenomenon of historical process. According to the Russian scientist Glazychev V.L., the city “is the phenomenon objectively necessary in the organization, functioning and development determined by the contents and the socio-cultural characteristic of society at all complexity and variety of its historical change. Interwoven into social fabric of society, the city reflects and expresses its development, bears in itself all its main features and at the same time provides the last. And as the specific effective organism it from the most emergence is accurately fixed and allocated in consciousness of the person” [7; 3]. Here the city defined as a special cultural phenomenon and as center of difficult structures of human knowledge. During each historical period cultural achievements of society are provided with functional properties of the cities.

The world famous Japanese architect K. Tange considers that growth of capital cities is stimulated by various escalating non-productive functions. In this regard, the capital role considerably becomes stronger, becomes complicated and defines further development of all nations [8]. In our opinion, this situation is key at research of a cultural phenomenon — Nur-Sultan.

Nur-Sultan became the capital of independent Kazakhstan in 1998. Transfer of the capital from Almaty is connected with a number of decisive advantages: An extensive urban area, a successful geographical site — proximity to the main economic centers of the country, considerable demographic potential, well-developed transport infrastructure and rather favorable environment.

New name — Nur-Sultan (from Kazakh “capital”) had to become a symbol of transformations from a position of administrative and political functions and an architectural image of the city. At the heart of the architectural and art solution of the new center of the capital proposed by the Japanese architect K. Kurokava, the principle of a metabolism (from Greek *Metabole* — change, transformation) which concept consists in development of a strong viable framework of any architectural form and easily updated elements lies.

He takes a basis of the given concept when developing the Master plan of development of Nur-Sultan not only symbiosis of the static base and dynamic ensemble of architectural elements but also symbiosis of the Soviet architectural heritage and the new city, natural and city elements, east and western philosophies. The similar situation is that matrix which reproduces itself throughout the millennia in all cities finding the status of the world capital.

There are different parameters of Nur-Sultan as the city and the capital. Nur-Sultan — the communication center of Eurasia; administrative center of the state, center of the central power; geopolitical education which defines a vector of development of all state and allows to structure society according to global world tendencies.

According to the modern domestic culture specialist K. Medeuova, Nur-Sultan — in the intension of novelty comprises will to that in its structure it was reflected not only the world of the nomad of a nomad, but also the global world transliterated by economy of desires in structures of nomadic consciousness [9; 170]. Reflecting on civilization traditions and mentality of the Kazakh nomadic people, the intrinsic nature of the city and traditional forms of broadcast of culture, we, thereby, create a condition for comprehension of the world in general. Ambivalence of city and traditional modes of life is considered here not only as a current state of the Kazakhstan culture, but also as a condition of an exit from local isolation in a condition of openness to the world.

The research of the domestic sociologist, Zairova Aygul, shows that in Kazakhstan the tendency to “metropolization” — a further urbanization of one or two large cities having magnetism of an attraction of the capital. It is about increase in internal migratory streams to Almaty and Nur-Sultan. In the last some years, mass internal migration to Nur-Sultan — is caused by socio-political factors (transfer of the capital from one area of the country to another) and a demographic situation (narrowness and a lack of land in the south of the republic) [10].

The researcher Syrgakbayeva A. in the book applies cultural and philosophical approach to the study on Nur-Sultan: “... in seventeen years since the beginning of the setting up, Nur-Sultan became a symbol of new Kazakhstan, the city “not stopping in the growth”, the city of infinite potential opportunities for creative growth, the city of “cultural and semiotics contrasts” that served as the soil for exclusively intensive intellectual reflection of the city. In Kazakhstan, there was a coincidence of processes of formation of new statehood, the new capital and growth of national consciousness of Kazakhstan citizens that staticized a problem of cultural and political identity. “The similar situation is that matrix which reproduces itself throughout millenniums in all cities finding the status of the world capital” [11; 210].

According to the President of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev, “within the time Nur-Sultan will become one of the powerful communication centers of Eurasia. Through our new capital economic, technological, information streams of the developing Eurasian space will proceed in new century. Besides, the city has almost infinite resources for further development — it is surrounded by steppes” [12; 107].

In empirical research of a role of Nur-Sultan in cultural and civilization process, we used a method focus group, allowing to collect qualitative information on the matter in the course of interaction of participants. The discussion purpose — to reveal the youth relation to Nur-Sultan as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The concept focus of group was based on system approach, considering the city as a result of communication and interaction of all elements of culture [13–15]. The scenario included the questions directed on identification of a role and understanding of Nur-Sultan in culturological, sociological, semiotics aspects. Focus of group respondents — student’s youth of the Karaganda Economic University.

The first block of research included the questions directed on an assessment of general idea of student’s youth about Nur-Sultan as about the capital of Kazakhstan.

Discussion of the declared subject began with a question: “What do you know about Nur-Sultan?”. During discussion respondents showed knowledge of history of Nur-Sultan, connected its future with a name of the President N. Nazarbayev, noted considerable changes in development of Nur-Sultan. Most of participants regard Nur-Sultan as the center of business activity and science, the student’s city, emphasize an arrangement, favorable from the economic and cultural point of view, and the developed infrastructure. Thus, respondents provided their answers as follows: “Nur-Sultan is the young, quickly developing capital”, “Nur-Sultan is a modern megalopolis”, “hardly any capital develops at such prompt speed”, “an administrative center of the country”, “transfer of the capital from Almaty is a right decision of the President”, “very beautiful city, with beautiful buildings”, “Nur-Sultan increases image of our country in the world”, “Nur-Sultan is the city for business”.

Many respondents would like to live in the capital, connect the future professional activity with it: “It is prestigious — to live in the capital”, “I want to live together with the family in Nur-Sultan”, “Practically all well-known scientists and cultural figures live in Nur-Sultan”, “My profession is demanded in Nur-Sultan”.

The part of respondents notes: “Nur-Sultan has high standards of life”, “The most important problem is lack of housing”, “It is necessary to work much to provide the financial position up to standard, life in all capitals very expensive”, “I love the city, and I go to Nur-Sultan for rest, entertainments, as the tourist”.

We will generalize results of discussion with questions: “With what does Nur-Sultan attract and with what does not?”. It is indicative fact that the most part of respondents noted architecture of buildings as examples of appeal of Nur-Sultan: The presidential residence, the Presidential center of culture, the Central state museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, Nur-Sultan Opera and ballet theater, Khan Shatyr shopping mall, the Monument “Nur-Sultan — Bayterek” and others.

We will give the most popular opinions of participants on a question “With what points Nur-Sultan doesn’t attract?”: “bad climate”, “the cardinal difference between “the left coast” and old part of the city”, “narrow roads”, “environmental problems”, “continuous vanity, and “people are inattentive to each other”, “it is necessary to refuse habitual life in the city”, “fear not to find friends”. Theses of participants and supervision over them show that respondents paid special attention to communications of people in the capital, on loneliness problems in the big city, complexity of adaptation to new speed and a format of life.

Participants of focus group repeatedly emphasized that the population of the capital differs in multinational structure, and in this regard on a question of what role of Nur-Sultan in ensuring tolerance and dialogue of cultures, respondents unambiguously noted: “Nur-Sultan — the face of poly-confessional Kazakhstan”, “Nur-Sultan — the capital of consent and the world”, “our capital was awarded with awards of UNESCO “City of the world”, “irrespective of a nationality, to the citizen of Nur-Sultan identify themselves Kazakhstan citizens”. We noted a role of Assembly of the people of Kazakhstan which sessions take place in the capital — Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions, existence at capital inhabitants of feeling of a community, close cultural values, norms and ideals.

Respondents consider that the history of Nur-Sultan confirms a community of history of destiny of many people, recent in the capital. The city built in the steppe and on bogs is the general merit of the people of Kazakhstan; participants of group are convinced of it.

During discussion of the first block of questions participants of focus group showed their understandings of concepts: “the public relations”, “system of values”, “religious tolerance”, “interfaith consent”, “national and territorial identity”, “unity of interest”, “poly-level of culture of society”.

The second block of questions is directed on identification of opinions on Nur-Sultan as the cultural phenomenon and prospects of youth connected with the capital.

The thesis “Nur-Sultan — a cultural brand of the country” caused discussion in participants of group.

Some participants do not consider Nur-Sultan the cultural center, generally referring to the insufficient level of capital culture at inhabitants, lack of historical monuments.

At the same time, opinion that in the capital is enough objects of culture, which kept national traditions combining the western tendencies of town planning, was expressed. The respondents considering the capital the cultural center note identity of cultures of the multinational population, development of trinity of languages, special dynamism of life, fashion, style and character people of Nur-Sultan. Most the opinion was with deep arguments proved that Nur-Sultan has a unique culturological image, long-term history, architecture. Carrying out the most significant cultural actions in Nur-Sultan acquaints the population of the capital and guests with art. One of the participants of focus group hoped that Nur-Sultan can become the key center of culture and art in global scales.

Respondents showed understanding of the phenomenon «a cultural brand» as follows: “uniqueness of the Kazakh traditions”, “system of norms and values of residents of the multinational city”, “in the city is opportunity for self-realization”, “the center of original constructions and quarters which aren't present in other cities and the countries”.

Is it indicative that respondents support the fact that participants consider modern architectural appearance of Nur-Sultan harmonious and the Master plan of construction and development of the capital in a general view? Opinions are as follows: “Nur-Sultan is the East city”, “in architecture of Nur-Sultan east and western cultures are integrated”, “the capital is still experimental base for architects”, “in the built buildings the modern design and national color are combined”, “architectural style of Nur-Sultan symbolizes the transformations happening in Kazakhstan”.

The analysis of answers testifies that respondents showed high criticality. Part of respondents consider that the architecture of Nur-Sultan imitates the western models, gradually losing national color; high migration to the capital leads to decline of other cities in the economic and cultural plan, to decrease in number of country people.

In representation of Nur-Sultan’s youth — the city is full of great opportunities for implementation of professional and personal plans. It is confirmed by opinions of participants on questions: “What educational projects exists in Nur-Sultan?” and “The city space influences social activity of young people? How?”.

Respondents were named a large number of universities of Nur-Sultan, thus the special status and a role of Nazarbayev University, high intellectual potential of the capital is underlined. Participants consider that “there are majority of students who are educated in the state educational grant in the higher education institutions Nur-Sultan”, “university graduates of Nur-Sultan are more competitive, than graduates of provincial higher education institutions” and they “have more chances to find good work in the capital”, “the educational environment at universities of Nur-Sultan is interactive”. According to most of respondents, students and youth of Nur-Sultan more often go to theaters, the museums, to concerts, sporting events, are more sociable, their life is eventful cultural and public life, they are active and advanced in the social plan.

It is referred to mobility, cross-cultural communications, and education to the powerful factors influencing social activity of young people in Nur-Sultan participants of group, technologies, and innovations in all spheres of public life.

Focus group participants was offered to discuss the phenomena of integration, migration, a segregation, assimilation, which cause a state and development of the welfare environment of Nur-Sultan. Thus, for most of participants these phenomena either are unknown, or are understood by them superficially. Only two of participants of focus group could explain essence of these concepts, pointed to their dual nature as factors of development of the personality in city space.

Respondents touched on issues of marginalization, unemployment, participation of youth in nonconventional religious associations, considering them negative factors of psychological influence. Young people become more susceptible to unknown, forbidden through active promotion, the developed social network of communication. The following theses were noted: “capital life can corrupt the young man”, “the weak mentality, psychological instability and emotionality become the basis for search of new feelings”, “lack of social control in the big city dulls perception”, “the wrong impression about permissiveness among unfamiliar people”, “the megalopolis — an excellent place for a freedom of action and thoughts is made”. Repeatedly respondents marked out that many students arrived to Nur-Sultan from the different cities and the villages of Kazakhstan, began independent life, felt freedom, lack of parental guardianship that is not always positively reflected in development of the personality.

It should be noted, what not all respondents clearly represent psychological impact of city life on youth. The researcher of an urban environment G. Zimmel in the work “Big Cities and Spiritual Life” carries the intensification of “nervous stimulus” understood by it as psychological impact on the person to number of unique achievements of the city of Zimmel. In his opinion, the city bombards the individual various signs, sounds and smells, and all this accustoms the individual to a bigger susceptibility and, along with it, to obstruction of perception [16].

One of participants of group admitted that up to this point he could not formulate why he does not live in Nur-Sultan. At the end of discussion of the matter the true reason, a barrier to undertakings in the capital, he called fear of negative influence of space of the big city.

All participants of the discussed question of a subject recognized need of studying for higher education institution of psychological and culturological aspects of influence of space of the city on consciousness of the person, his mentality and spirituality.

The considerable events influencing cultural development of the capital, respondents called Nur-Sultan economic forum, EXPO–2017. Upon termination of discussion of the second block of questions respondents formulated a socio-cultural phenomenon — Nur-Sultan in the following statements: “a symbol of independence of the state”, “a basis for providing a sustainable development of the Republic of Kazakhstan”, “a heart of Eurasia”, “the city with competitive economy, attractive to citizens of the country and tourists, businessmen”.

### *Conclusions*

As a result of the application of focus group method by authors of the article, following conclusions were drawn.

The city is considered today as the political, administrative, economic center in which there are global social and cultural changes. The city space unites various communities of people and various subcultures. As the culture embodiment, the carrier of a set of functions, habitat, a place of concentration of socio-cultural transformations, the city is an object of impact on public consciousness. These characteristics take place to be in study and definition of a socio-cultural phenomenon — Nur-Sultan. From a capital position, Nur-Sultan symbolizes independence of the state, its prosperity, Kazakhstan citizens connect with the future of the country.

The city space of Nur-Sultan is a source of social activity for youth. The youth connects prospects of professional and personal formation with Nur-Sultan. Young people consider that the capital has sufficient intellectual potential for creative growth and the human resources capable of providing intensive development in production and spiritual spheres.

Cross-cultural communications, poly-confessional, dynamism of the international relations and consent became intrinsic lines of the capital of Kazakhstan. They give stable and steady nature of human activity, positively influence cultural and civilization process.

Focus of group is an important result of work updating of a number of problems: Housing, psychological, transport communications, organization of the architectural and art environment of the city, town planning, political and cultural identity of Kazakhstan citizens.

The modern youth has sufficient knowledge of history of the capital, has idea of modernization of infrastructure of the city, and represents a role of significant commercial, cultural and leisure and housing objects of Nur-Sultan, understanding of a cultural phenomenon of Nur-Sultan.

Focus of group is result of discussion of participants' recognition of the fact of coincidence of processes of formation of new statehood, the new capital and growth of national consciousness.

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### Астананың социомәдени феноменін зерттеу

Мақаланың мазмұнында мәдени-өркениет үдерісіндегі елорданың рөлін зерттеудің маңызды аспектілері: елорданың әлеуметтік-мәдени ерекшеліктері, Нұр-Сұлтан қаласының кеңістігін қабылдау, мәдениетаралық коммуникация бойынша фокус-топ қатысушыларының пікірлері көрініс тапқан. Бас қала феномен ретінде гуманитарлық ғылымдардағы таным объектісіне айналып, онда отандық ғалымдар астананың қоғамдық санадағы рөлін ұғынуға, патриотизм мен азаматтық сезімдерді қалыптастыруға ерекше мән береді, елорданың әлеуметтік-мәдени ерекшеліктерін, мәдениетаралық коммуникацияларды ұйымдастырудың факторлары мен тетіктерін зерттейді. Жаңа астана елдің экономикалық өсуіне серпін беруге, халықтың біркелкі орналаспауын реттейтін, Қазақстанның полиэтникалық құрылымын бекемдеуге, космополит қалаға айналуға тиіс орталық болып табылады. Пікірталас және талқылау нәтижесінде: астананың жастардың саяси мәдениетіне және оның

әлеуметтік белсенділігіне әсері анықталды, жастарға елорданың болашағы мен мәдени маңызы туралы түсініктер берілді, мәдени процесті ұйымдастырудың ғылыми-техникалық, білім беру, саяси, көркемдік-эстетикалық салаларының өзара іс-қимылын түсіну анықталды.

*Кілт сөздер:* қала, астана, урбанизация, мәдениет, өркениет, мәдениетаралық коммуникация, Нұр-Сұлтан.

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## Исследование социокультурного феномена столицы

В содержании статьи нашли отражение мнения участников фокус-группы по важным аспектам исследования роли столицы в культурно-цивилизационном процессе: социокультурные особенности столицы, восприятие городского пространства Нур-Султана, межкультурная коммуникация. Главный город как феномен становится предметом познания в гуманитарных науках, где отечественными учеными придается особое значение осмыслению роли столицы в общественном сознании, формированию патриотизма и гражданских чувств, изучаются социокультурные особенности столицы, факторы и механизмы организации межкультурных коммуникаций. Новая столица представляет собой центр, который должен дать толчок экономическому росту страны, преодолеть неравномерное размещение населения, скрепить полиэтническую структуру Казахстана, стать городом-космополитом. В результате обсуждения и дискуссии выявлены: влияние столицы на политическую культуру молодежи и ее социальную активность, даны представления молодежи о перспективах и культурном значении столицы, отражено понимание взаимодействия научно-технической, образовательной, политической, художественно-эстетической сфер организации культурного процесса.

*Ключевые слова:* город, столица, урбанизация, культура, цивилизация, межкультурная коммуникация, Нур-Султан.

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